

Writing for Publication Workshop: 12 November 2015

University of Bedfordshire, Putteridge Bury Campus.

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A free 'writing for publication' workshop for healthcare professionals was run on the 12th November 2015 at the University of Bedfordshire's Putteridge Bury Campus. The workshop attracted 18 clinical practitioners from a variety of clinical backgrounds and included Doctors, Nurses, Physiotherapists, Pharmacists, Social Workers and Biomedical Scientists from NHS Trusts from around the East of England and Thames Valley. The innovative approach to the workshop also included bringing these practitioners

together with postgraduate students undertaking the Principles of Emergency, Acute and Critical Care course whose assessment was to produce a clinical article ready for submission and publication. The aim of the workshop was to develop participants' understanding of the writing and publication process from the perspective of a novice author and from an experienced writer and editor, and in turn assisting them in developing a manuscript for submission.

Although participants were at various stages of preparing a manuscript for publication (some were just thinking of publishing, some wanted to convert MSc and MA thesis, some had audit and research data to present, and some had a message to disseminate about innovations in clinical practice), they were all at the early stages of their writing careers and wanted assistance in beginning the publishing process.

Following group introductions, David Mathew started the first activity. This used speed writing to answer questions in short bursts of time:

- Who am I? (This is used simply to get the participants used to thinking, organising and writing quickly.) *1 minute.*
- What do I want to write about? *2 minutes.*
- Why do I want to write it? *3 minutes.*
- Why would an editor want to publish this? *2 minutes.*
- What are my challenges? *1 minute.*
- How will I overcome my challenges? *1 minute.*

David Mathew elicited responses and all but one participant found the experience a good way of focusing on the proposed paper. The one exception found the experience 'challenging' but completed the activity in more detail than many of the others. The group members were clear that they had each written a version of an abstract and/or introduction to the proposed paper that they wanted to write. We would build on this abstract throughout the day. When the participants fed back a summary of what they had written, David Mathew kept a tally of themes. In order, the most used terms were: original; new (as in updating some old research); passion; benefits (to others).



Dr Mark Wareing talking about why we should publish and his own experiences. Dean Whiting ©

Dr Mark Wareing (Director of Practice Learning) gave a motivating and inspiring talk on why healthcare professionals should write and the benefits of doing so. He drew upon his own experiences as a writer in a clinical setting as a practitioner and as a writer in an academic setting, and made useful comparisons to show colleagues the impact of clinical composition.

Dean Whiting then talked about the importance of the correct journal choice, giving consideration to the impact and audience that you want to influence. His message was to remember three things: firstly, keep the writing focussed on your key message; secondly, know your audience; and lastly, know what you want to tell them and why. He then led the group through a consideration of audience and applicability activity. He then gave his recent experiences of the publishing process through the lens of a novice writer for his most recent publication.

After lunch and participant networking, David Mathew split the group into three sub-groups. We discussed a general clinical paper's structure (appropriate order of constituent parts); and after each group discussion about 'what comes next?' the group members made notes about how they would fill in this section of their own paper (individually). Volunteers were asked at each stage to describe how their paper was coming along. In other words, each group member was 'building' his or her paper throughout this session. The importance of utilising consensus based reporting standards in producing clinical papers was impressed upon the group to ensure that the correct information is portrayed in the finished article.

We closed the day with Dean Whiting taking the groups through an abridged peer review and editing activity. The aim was to give the group an opportunity to experience the process of anonymous peer review and how to deal with the occasional negative and frequent positive responses from reviewers. This activity began by members writing for ten minutes either on the subject of 'My favourite superhero' or 'My favourite food' – although when they did so, they did not know what the purpose of the activity was (deliberately)!

Dean was surprised that the group did not question the potential audience for the work, focus, or key message! – but he pressed on nonetheless (a valuable learning point for the group!). The participants' work was then 'anonymously' shared amongst the group and 'peer review' was undertaken. The group was asked to reflect upon the process of peer review. Overwhelmingly the group acknowledged the difficulties in reviewing work in the absence of guidelines. This raised the importance of obtaining the author guidelines for the writer's chosen journal. The work was then given back to the author to read the comments. This was an anxiety-provoking activity for the group, but the feedback was taken in good humour. The feedback was not uncommon with that received from actual journal reviewers and consisted of positive and negative comments as well as some rewriting the work for the author! The group reflected on this aspect of the process and some techniques were discussed on how best to deal with this situation.

Overall, this was an excellent day's workshop and thoroughly enjoyed by both the participants and presenters. The atmosphere was positive, encouraging and supportive and we eagerly await the finished papers that were developed during this day.

Written Feedback:

An informative and really well led day, thank you. Any courses that were run in the future, particularly on the development of business plans, service development and research / evaluation projects would be great.

Thank you for an inspirational day with motivated lecturers and students alike. I enjoyed the day very much and it highlighted some of the reasons why I perhaps haven't published before. What a wonderful diverse group. Regards

I found this course to be excellent. It was very well run and organised, very informative and gave me all the information I needed. This course has inspired me to finish my article for publication. Thank you so much

I would like to thank all of the organisers of the event for their remarkable effort. I found it, very helpful and very high level.

If you could have known before we met what our interests were, so the working groups could have been more well-aligned to need, it would have helped. The last exercise, while amusing, might have been more helpful if we had known we were meant to write to the structure outlined during the day. We could then have critiqued one another's work in a more serious vein. Overall, very useful day, with casualness pitched well and substance helpful for future work. Many thanks.

Most helpful. Friendly, engaging and informative presenters.

The day was well structured; the speakers were very engaging and gave lots of tips. The day has made the process of writing and publishing feel more achievable.

Thank you very much for this - it has given me some good ideas and info to take back to my colleagues.

I thought this was a well organised workshop, the structure was well considered. It was interactive and engaging. Whilst, the focus was on collaborative working within the workshop, it still allowed for development of individual ideas, this was enabling and left me feeling enthused and focused for starting to write an article. A big thank you to the 2 facilitators, who were enthusiastic and knowledgeable on this topic. A highly relevant workshop for anyone in healthcare considering publishing work.

Well facilitated- informal and considerate attitude of David and Dean created a good learning atmosphere. Many thanks.